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ABSTRACT

While preparing for reauthorization of the Vocational Education Act, the United States Department of Education is looking at the inadequacies of the present law: overemphasis on process and accountability resulting in its being administratively burdensome, inadequate provision for basic skill development, and no provision for improving and developing new training programs, particularly in areas of critical skills shortages--areas necessary to economic revitalization. The Vocational Education Act needs to be refocused in the direction of cooperation between schools and employers and provision of federal incentives without federal coercion. One of the greatest needs in promoting productivity is to improve the delivery of vocational education skills and vocational education students to the employer. Management problems in the delivery system include unclear definitions of the vocational education mission at national and state levels and a need for delineation of roles and responsibilities for all partners in vocational education. The Department of Education considers the reauthorization an opportunity to target the program to high school youth; out-of-school, unemployed youth in depressed urban and rural areas; postsecondary and adult vocational students; and prisoners in penal institutions and also an opportunity to address national problems that hinder economic revitalization. (Questions and answers are appended.) (YLB)

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Occasional Paper No. 91

THE FEDERAL PERSPECTIVE ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION'S ROLE IN ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION AND PRODUCTIVITY

by

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FOREWORD

The issues of productivity and economic efficiency are currently important themes that undergird major developments taking place in the nation's capital and in business and industry. Certainly a revolution is taking place to move America toward a renewed spirit of economic vitality. This paper was developed from a presentation at the National Center on this subject by Dr. Kent Lloyd, Deputy Undersecretary for Management in the U.S Department of Education. Since management practices and the effects of vocational education are so important to productivity and economic efficiency, Dr. Lloyd is in a unique position to speak on the topic.

Dr. Lloyd is a management development specialist. Formerly President of the Center for Leadership Development in California, he was trained in public management at Stanford University. He served as Professor for Public Administration at the University of Southern California and as Professor of Business Management at Pepperdine University. He has conducted in-depth, competency-based management development seminars designed to help vocational education leaders improve their performance and accountability in public service organizations such as vocational schools and state administrative offices of vocational education.

On behalf of the National Center for Research in Vocational Education and The Ohio State University, we are pleased to share the presentation by Dr. Kent Lloyd entitled: "The Federal Perspective on Vocational Education's Role in Economic Revitalization and Productivity."

Robert E. Taylor
Executive Director
The National Center for Research
in Vocational Education

THE FEDERAL PERSPECTIVE ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION'S ROLE IN ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION AND PRODUCTIVITY

A basic activity with far-reaching implications for the themes of productivity and revitalization of the American economy is eminent. I would like to talk about the federal perspective in our attempts to prepare for the reauthorization of the Vocational Education Act. I would also like to add a personal note on improving the management of vocational education.

Last week I received a call from the undersecretary of education who had been talking with Secretary of Education T. H. Bell. They had just learned that our attempts to prevent a cut in the administrative budget for the U S. Department of Education for fiscal year 1982 had failed. The senator who was planning to offer an amendment on the floor felt that he did not have the support to do so. This week, we were in a wild game in Washington—attempting to pass tax initiatives as well as come to grips with the fiscal year 1982 budget cuts. In the U.S. Department of Education, we are now facing a 25 percent or $40-50 million cut in our fiscal year 1981 budget. It will mean that by about October 1982, we are going to have a reduction in staff of at least 20 to 25 percent. Such budgetary cuts are very difficult to come to grips with. Thus my interest in productivity has suddenly gone up very quickly.

Yesterday afternoon, as I talked to the managers who work with me, we determined that we must become at least 25 percent more productive to maintain current priority activities. We have some hard choices to make. Our argument with the Congress is that you cannot cut our budget at this time because we have the same work load. This level of work will continue through next year and after that time, we can take the cut. But of course, Congress hears this same story from every department scheduled for cuts.

The federal government has been a partner in the vocational education efforts of the nation since the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917. That role was solidified in 1963 with the landmark passage of the Vocational Education Act, which created a permanent authority for federal assistance to the states to fund job training for youth and adults in the schools. But clearly the federal government is only one of several partners in this vital undertaking. No one of the partners can do the job alone. Government at the federal, state, and local levels; pre- and postsecondary public and private schools and institutions; and business and industry are working partners in this effort to increase our society's productivity by developing its work force.

All too frequently one of these partners, either out of a sense of exasperation with the others or out of a sense of overconfidence in its own abilities, assumes it can take on the greatest share of the burden. But the partnership must not be dissolved; rather, it must be made more cost-effective. As an illustration, some of you may remember reading in the newspaper this spring that the U.S. Navy was going to be billed as much as $100 billion for the costs of faulty workmanship performed by the employees of a major private corporation on the Trident submarine. Acknowledging that the company had experienced major problems during a large and swift expansion of its work force during the seventies, the corporation's general manager also essentially admitted that its work force had been guilty of shoddy workmanship. The corporation had been unable to provide the skill training required for such an influx of unskilled employees.

The Navy contends that this condition still persists. The corporation expects the U.S. Navy (that is, the federal government) to pay the corporation $100 million to correct the results of its own workmanship because the Navy chose to act as the corporation's insurer. The argument is still waging.

What is ironic in this situation is that over a year ago, the *Wall Street Journal* carried the following quotation by the same general manager.

> I do not believe it is realistic for business to expect the vocational education system to deliver trained workers. The state-of-the-art in industry, metalworking, the computer sciences, and elsewhere is advancing too rapidly to expect that we can continually invest in the capital equipment such as our technical or vocational schools would need to keep pace. I, for one, would be delighted if our vocational schools would bring us graduates who, if not trained, were simply trainable, who could understand basic manufacturing processes, who could do shop math, and who could use standard tools and gauges. Certainly industry can, in its own shops and classrooms, take it from there.

And now, a short time later, they would like the government to pay the $100 million to go back and recover that work.

The Trident incident has probably caused this corporation's general manager to pause and reconsider his view. Private industry certainly has a role in the massive skill training program that is inherent in the coming defense buildup. But clearly, so do current technical and vocational establishments and others in the partnership. The problem in the Trident incident was primarily poorly trained welders. Most medium to large vocational schools are already equipped to train skilled welders. Thus little additional investment would be required to correct this deficiency. Certainly the investment would not approach the $100 million in extra support being sought by private firm.

Now, as we turn to the question of this administration's commitment to vocational education, I would like to share with you what I have learned in Washington in the short time that I have been there. I recently read a speech by President Reagan that he had delivered a dozen years ago while governor of California. The speech was entitled "Technical Education—the Pathway to Social and Economic Stability." In this speech, he referred to the unanimous passage of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968. He stated,

> In effect this legislation is a mandate to the states to implement sound programs of vocational education to the end that every person in every community in the state does, in fact, have access to the kinds of occupational preparation that will enable him to move rapidly and effectively in the labor force and become a producer of the goods and services that society needs. The full dimensions of the act will come into focus only after state and local governments begin providing and testing far-reaching provisions, from funding a network of vocational regional occupation centers to the underwriting of programs for training of vocational teachers. This is indicative of the growing recognition throughout the United States of the need to put more emphasis on the training of technical manpower.

From these comments, you can see that the president has a long-standing commitment to vocational education.

As a further example of the administration's commitment to vocational education, I would like to highlight the Heritage Foundation's 1980 mandate for national leadership in vocational education. In an article written by Ronald F. Docksize, it was stated that "The new administration

should have a strong commitment to vocational education. Vocational education programs serve 20 million young people and adults and currently receive $750 billion annually in federal funds. They have long enjoyed bipartisan support. Reconsideration of CETA Title IV—A Youth Employment Programs and reauthorization of the Vocational Education Act should be the occasion of examination of federal policies and programs."

Now, for some comments about the preliminary strategy that the U.S. Department of Education is following in its preparation for this reauthorization exercise. The staff is taking a long and hard look at the present law. They are finding that the current law is administratively burdensome because of an overemphasis on process and accountability. At the same time, the present law does not adequately provide for basic skill development. It does not provide incentives for improving and developing new training programs, particularly in those areas where critical skills shortages are apparent.

These areas are also necessary to economic revitalization. Economic revitalization is obviously an issue of extreme concern to both the administration and to the U.S. Department of Labor.

In a paper published last year by the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Daniel Taylor, former assistant secretary for vocational and adult education, noted that the historically high rate of productivity in the United States suffered during the decades of the fifties and sixties—a time when the productivity growth rate was approxiately 3 percent annually. He also compared the productivity growth rate in the United States from 1966 to 1975 with the rates in Japan, Sweden, and West Germany. The United States growth rate during that period averaged only 2 percent while the growth rates of the other countries grew annual rates of 9, 6, and 5.5 percent respectively. In 1979, he wrote, the U.S. actually suffered a loss in productivity for the first time.

What are the consequences of the decline in national productivity? Obviously, inflation affords spiraling wages with no real increase in buying power. Unemployment, the loss of jobs to other nations, and the waste of our valuable human resources are all dangers with which we are familiar. We must increase our productivity if we are to strengthen and revitalize the economy. It is in our interest to develop vocational education reauthorization legislation that will utilize federal funds to the fullest extent to strengthen vocational education efforts and to remove government controls that stand in the way of productivity. The partnership and the partners that I referred to earlier must be strengthened.

A review of current federal law shows that despite efforts to integrate classroom instruction with work experience in the private sector through cooperative education and work/study programs, the amount and quality of this training component is insufficient. The Vocational Education Act needs to be substantially strengthened and refocused in this direction. To that end, you will find certain principles reflected in our proposed legislation. Cooperation between schools and employers is a cornerstone in our program approach. It is necessary to improve the current cooperative vocational education program and to create incentives that encourage other forms of employer and school cooperation. Instruction in basic skills should ensure that every graduate of a vocational education program has the capability needed to achieve employment advancement in a changing economy. We must strengthen state and local systems of vocational education by the provision of federal support for improving and developing new programs.

Another approach is the provision of federal incentives without federal coercion. The federal government should provide support for the development of programs in areas of key federal concern such as special programs for economically depressed areas, programs for special

populations, and programs for strengthening both the vocational education enterprise and the work force in areas that are of critical concern to the economic revitalization initiative. This must be accomplished without federal intrusion in the educational process. President Reagan is very serious, as is Secretary Bell, about looking at the controversy involved in legislative accountability versus legislative control; a controversy that has been going on in this country for many years. We are committed to reducing that paperwork burden. We are attempting to do much of this through the state block grant program. That program is already having its battles in Congress. We are not sure how it will finally end. But certainly, this administration is committed to giving state and local entities much more control over their programs and letting them make priority policy decisions when resources are as scarce as they are. State agencies, in cooperation with local entities, would determine criteria for allocation among target groups, programs, and training sponsors by setting these priorities. To meet these objectives, the new legislation will have two basic thrusts. The first part is oriented toward individual needs, while the second part aims at improving overall economic conditions and solving national problems. Funds will continue to be provided both through formula grants and through discretionary grants or contracts.

Now, I will turn to a topic that may be very bad news to some people, and may be very controversial to others. I do this at the risk of stirring up a little interest. My thesis for the second part of this paper is simply that I believe one of our greatest needs in promoting productivity is to improve the delivery of vocational education skills and vocational education students to the employer. I believe that for many years we have fooled ourselves about how effectively we deliver those skills and those students. I believe there are many weaknesses in the delivery system. If we could solve those weaknesses and inherent problems, we might be in a position to really test whether or not students can do the jobs for which they were trained. Perhaps we could even identify and solve some of the employer problems that we have.

We have little problem in identifying our commitment to vocational education. The participants in this conference represent people and professionals from all parts of the United States who are committed to vocational education. The Congress of the United States has probably funded vocational education with a more steady commitment than almost any other program in education. I do not believe commitment is the problem. We mistake commitment for the goal or for the outcome of vocational education. We are frustrated by the delivery system and by how well it allows us to process students and place them in the work force. I do not think we can take much pride in the effectiveness of the current vocational education delivery system. We are pragmatic enough to know there are realistic problems that we must address if we are going to avoid having private industry, Congress, the U.S. Department of Labor or private organizations attempt to do this job for us.

A U.S. Department of Education longitudinal study suggests that this nation's vocational education system at the secondary school level generally creates no labor market advantages for its graduates. Except for young women in office occupations, most vocational graduates find jobs similar to those of nonvocational graduates. When compared to their nonvocational counterparts, vocational graduates experience similar rates of pay, similar rates of unemployment, similar degrees of job satisfaction, similar levels of knowledge about occupations, and similar dropout rates. In light of such statistics, it is clear that we need to solve some of these basic problems in our delivery system.

The following are some of the management problems that I have identified. First, our vocational education mission is not clearly defined at either national or state levels. Ten days ago I was talking with Caroline Warner, state superintendent of public instruction in Arizona. She continues to amaze me with her personal commitment to practical vocational education and to

the establishment of a delivery system that works with employers. With the help of industrial leaders and state vocational education staff, she has developed a state plan for vocational education that meets the needs of the people of Arizona. It is targeted to meet the specific needs of industries in that state. From this example, it is clear that industrial viewpoints on the results of vocational preparation in a state need to be reviewed. Given our rapidly growing technologies and our needs for economic revitalization, is there any reason why all high school students are not required to obtain adequate preparation in a vocation before they graduate from high school? In effect, they should be able to pass competency skill examinations in a vocation before they graduate.

In some areas of Canada and Sweden, for example, there are comprehensive educational systems that seem to provide all students with vocational education as well as with some general studies. Yugoslavia is in the process of building a similar system. Portugal abolished its vocational schools with the intent of creating comprehonsive secondary education. Where such schools exist, they are able to adjust automatically the number of young people that are trained as their population changes. In addition, they are able to provide this training to everyone in accordance with school participation rates. In countries such as Finland, the status of vocational studies in upper secondary schools is being raised by allowing vocational students to qualify for access to other kinds of higher education. We already know that the U.S. educational system differs from the European system in its attempts to reach all youngsters with vocational education. However, the question still remains: why do we not require that every youngster be prepared for employment upon graduation from high school?

We must delineate clear roles and responsibilities for all the partners in the vocational education delivery system. First, business and industry should share in the responsibility to provide counseling, training, instructors, facilities, and equipment. I maintain that our system of free enterprise implies the need, and indeed, the responsibility, to contribute directly to improving the quality of education. I think it is a dangerous precedent for employers to continue to batter the public education system and to join with those who would destroy it. For 200 years, we have taken a public education system for granted. We have assumed that this system would produce trained graduates who had basic skills, and who could then (with very little difficulty) move into industry. That source of trained human resources cannot continue if we continue to berate, challenge, and weaken our public school system.

Today, many middle-class and upper-class parents are taking their children out of the public schools and are putting them into private schools. Consequently, they perceive little need to support the public school system. If that continues, and if we continue to introduce programs such as the voucher system that effectively weaken the public school system, we will have essentially lost our great opportunity to provide the free enterprise system with a pool of trained human resources. Please do not misunderstand me—I do think the idea of competition is a healthy one. Nevertheless, if we do not find additional ways of strengthening the public school system, it will deteriorate—just as it has in South America and Europe. Then, we will have only poor children attending public schools and the rich or the middle-class children will be attending private schools.

Many people say that industries can "take up the slack." But it would be extremely expensive for industries to substitute their own training facilities for the public education system in America. In addition, I am sure that there would be some other very negative consequences.

We should not be fooled about the purpose of industry. Industry must make a profit. But it must also make this profit with a public conscience. Industry must be concerned with an equitable return to the cause of education; it is in its self-interest to do so. And indeed, American

businesses today are making significant commitments to education in many areas. Many electrical, automotive, cosmetics, and food preparation industries have instituted educational activities. A prime example of such commitment is the American Home Sewing Association (AHSA). I would like to point out that this business pumps $3.5 billion into the economy every year, and its 500 member companies are major employers in all fifty states. AHSA not only supports a system of sewing guilds across the country, but also provides information for 20,000 junior and senior high schools and community colleges across the country—including sewing instruction for their home economics curricula. Two and one-half years ago, the AHSA sponsored two independent surveys which showed that home economics teachers were in desperate need of instructional assistance. To meet this need, the association founded a teacher's service subsidiary and to date, has spent almost $350,000 planning and conducting two-day seminars to help home economics teachers improve their ability to attract students and to teach modern sewing technology. We at the U.S. Department of Education see this particular effort as a pilot program for education improvement that can serve as an example to encourage additional industry and business support for vocational education in the eighties. We could cite many more examples. But it is amazing how few of these examples have been field-tested and have gained wide use.

In Los Angeles seven or eight years ago, I participated in a cooperative project between business and industry and the Los Angeles school systems called "Project Seventies." Through this project, the Pacific Telephone Company obtained the commitment of 200 corporations in the Los Angeles area to become partners with the Los Angeles School District in sharing their collective training facilities. We also had a task force on tutors. The industries provided thousands of tutors for youngsters in ghetto schools. Once or twice a week, volunteers from these corporations would go to the schools to help students learn basic and vocational skills. Furthermore, the project provided task forces on administrative and management training, on teacher and counselor training, on work experience, and on career counseling. It was heartwarming to see this program develop—to see the promise it had and to see how excited the industry staff people were.

A few years later, the program began to dissolve. Something began to happen. Communications ceased. The educators distrusted the motives of the businesspeople and the businesspeople certainly had their views about educators. The chasm we had painstakenly worked to bridge began to grow wider.

There were some successes in this story, but I am amazed at how much energy was spent in trying to build a partnership that gradually fizzled out. The leadership became concerned with other matters; the commitments died. We went right back to business as usual—talking about what a wonderful idea it would be if business and education were to form a partnership. Our problem was that the delivery system was deficient.

As a second step in the effort to delineate clearly the roles of the partners in the vocational education enterprise, members of local school boards should establish guidelines that require competency-based vocational skill training for all high school graduates. This is something they have the prerogative to do as they establish curricula.

As a third step, superintendents and principals should be held accountable for the academic and vocational training of all citizens in their school districts. In areas where they have no jurisdiction over certain target populations, they should become catalysts for building a community-wide accountability network. The target populations I refer to should include high school students, high school dropouts, university graduates, adults, women in transition to the work force, and prisoners who are coming before parole boards or who have been released.

Vocational educators must be responsive to the retraining needs of their community systems. They must be accountable for their efforts and see that district plans to achieve priority objectives are developed and implemented.

Fourth, vocational educators have a tremendous responsibility in the success or failure of the vocational education enterprise. A few months ago, I participated in a management and development program for vocational educators in the states of Utah and Arizona. I commend Ray Ryan, state director of vocational education in Arizona, for his leadership in initiating a bold program for upgrading the skills of state staff in modern management techniques and practices. He was also attempting to provide these same opportunities for local vocational educators and administrators. These programs are not without their challenges and resistances. We are aware that as professionals, each one of us (according to Alvin Toffler) will have to "retool" our careers at least seven times during our lifetime. You and I have probably gone through about three "retoolings" by now. We still have a long way to go. Yet we vigorously resist suggestions that we are not well trained or up to date. In other words, it is not only the students who need instruction. As we function in this partnership for vocational education, all of us need instruction.

Fifth, research centers such as the National Center for Research in Vocational Education should continuously address employment needs, maintain current employment profiles, and measure the progress we have made toward our goals in relation to our mission.

Sixth, Congress and state legislatures should hold educators accountable for certifying the results of their work. These legislative leaders must also promulgate national policy that is in line with our times. In a recent newspaper column, it was argued that our national policies regarding unemployment and the work force were developed during the thirties and are therefore hopelessly antiquated. If this is true, perhaps we ought to examine the policies of other nations. For example, since 1964, West Germany has provided every adult (employed or unemployed) with up to two years full-time training or retraining. This program not only covers the cost of training, but also provides an income subsidy that can be as high as 90 percent of the person's normal wages.

On the plane from Washington, as I was reading the *Washington Post*, I came across an article by William Raspberry that contained some interesting data on workers that private industry does not want. In regards to hiring young, unskilled school dropouts, only 18 percent of the private employers who were offered a 100 percent wage subsidy agreed to participate in a project for these workers. When the subsidy was set at 75 percent, the participation rate fell to 10 percent. When a wage subsidy of 50 percent was offered, the participation rate was only 5 percent. The dream of having everything turn out right if we have the right incentive program is just that—a dream. These are difficult linkages to build, and judging from such an example, I do not think we know how to do it very well. The benefits of current incentive systems are not very clear.

As the seventh step, students and their parents must articulate their demand for more competency-based skills as part of the education system.

I would like to finish by discussing expanded target populations and enlarging our vision. I believe that our vocational educators and programs must serve all citizens in our communities. For years I participated in the training and retraining of school superintendents who, like most of us, received training as teachers and then became principals. Then they became superintendents. Each successive step was taken without additional management training. We were able to provide them with additional training through a manpower grant from the U.S. Department of Education—under the rationale that this was in fact vocational education update training for school superintendents. And indeed it was.

At the time I assisted with this training, I was amazed at how little concern these dedicated men and women had for those who dropped out of high school. They did not feel that educating these people was their problem. It was the U.S. Department of Labor's problem, the community's problem, or somebody else's problem. In their view, there were two employment programs going on simultaneously: one at their level, and one at someone else's level. We must work to overcome this attitude. Our basic employment problems are in the high schools. That is where they must be solved. Some states have virtually taken vocational education out of the high schools and have created another delivery system because of the shortsighted thinking of school administrators. Policymakers cannot understand that shortsighted thinking.

We at the U.S. Department of Education consider the forthcoming reauthorization an opportunity to target our program to four general areas.

First, in regards to high school youth, these young men and women would receive generalized occupational training together with specific skills training that would lead to employment and work experience in cooperative programs with our partners in private industry. They would receive ancillary services such as counseling, guidance, and job placement. This target population would include potential dropouts at the secondary school level.

Second, the matter of out-of-school, unemployed youth in depressed urban and rural areas is addressed. These young people would receive programs of full-time work and classroom instruction similar to what is now provided under CETA Title IV (A) Youth Programs. If our society and economy are to be revitalized, we must reach out to this group who has fallen out of our traditional systems of education and employment. In the Reagan speech I mentioned earlier, he noted that we have "entirely too many people, high school dropouts, high school graduates, and college dropouts, who can't do anything or perform any service that the labor market is ready to buy."

Third, we consider the case of postsecondary and adult vocational students. Such students would benefit through several types of activities. For example, there would be support for an industrial and educational partnership to meet the specific needs of local employers. Retraining programs for employed and unemployed adults who are seeking skill upgrading or training would be supported. Further, financial incentives for such training would be made available to employers to promote cooperation with community colleges or other appropriate postsecondary institutions in developing joint training programs using shared facilities and other resources.

Fourth, provisions for another target group that has surfaced lately—the population of prisoners in our penal institutions—are made. While reauthorization discussions have not specifically been addressed towards the needs of inmates of penal institutions, there is a need for all of us to consider what Chief Justice Warren Burger has termed our "moral obligation to prisoners." Recently, in a commencement address to the George Washington University School of Law, Chief Justice Burger stated: "I have long believed and I have frequently said that when society places a person behind walls and bars, it has a moral obligation to take some steps to try and render him or her better equipped to return to a useful life as a member of society." As one phase of his proposal, Burger urges the creation of a national academy of corrections to train prison personnel: the attendants and guards who relate to the prisoners daily. But he also urges the introduction or expansion of two kinds of education programs for the inmates themselves. In his own words: "The first would be to make certain that every inmate who cannot read, write, spell, and do simple arithmetic would be given that training. Not as an optional matter but as a mandatory requirement for getting out. Focusing on the longer-term prisoner, the second phase of this educational program would require a large expansion of vocational training in the skilled and semiskilled crafts." Burger's proposal can be justified on solid economic grounds. In the

state of California alone there are approximately 26,000 inmates. Projected figures indicate that there will be over 33,000 by 1985. The current cost of keeping one inmate in custody for a year is estimated to be $13,087—making the current annual cost in California alone over $340 million. That is about half of what the federal government spends for vocational education nationwide. Is it any wonder that taxpayers are unhappy about paying for education two or three times for the same individual? First for the individual's early education, later for retraining in order to be employed, and possibly again during incarceration.

As we project our vision to include heretofore unserved populations, we should also look at national problems whose solutions may rest only in part on improved vocational education efforts. In the U.S. Department of Education, we are currently discussing four such areas that will call for the development of new networks and new partnerships between the executive and legislative branches; between and among the various federal agencies; among various governmental jurisdictions at federal, state and local levels; and among public and private concerns. The nation must provide resources to address these problem areas if we truly are to revitalize our economic system and our society.

First, we must address both the ailing defense industrial base and low readiness rates in the active and reserve armed forces due to training inadequacies. The armed forces often get our high school dropouts and our functional illiterates. This administration intends to spend more than $100 billion over what was planned by the previous administration to alleviate the problems that contribute to this dangerous condition.

American food production and foreign policy is a second area of concern related to a trained work force. A recent study predicted that if arable land continues to be converted to housing and other commercial development at its present rate, the United States will become a food importer no later than the year 2000. The implications for this are grave not only for the United States, but also for those underdeveloped countries that depend on us for substantial portions of their food supply. A recent article on Kenya, Africa, for example, indicates that with a 4 percent birthrate, that agricultural nation right now has to import food. Within the next ten years, it will double its population—with no hope of feeding these additional people. The training of human resources to deal with this global problem can be coordinated only at national levels in conjunction with other governmental agencies and other private associations.

Third, energy production and the economy are of extreme importance because of the impact of these areas on all other areas of concern. The U.S. Department of Energy predicts the United States may experience a dollar outflow to OPEC nations that will destroy its economic base. Figures from this department project that this lost cash will be in the $80 billion range in 1982. Whatever solutions are sought, there is a growing need to develop energy technicians and engineers across the several energy-related fields.

Finally, decaying urban cores are potential areas for social disruption. Since the mid-sixties, the explosive problem of economic and social decay in our urban centers has been deceptively quiet. The sharp increase of violent crime in most urban areas, particularly in the inner-city ghettos, may forecast a widescale eruption. These high crime rates primarily involve eighteen- to twenty-four-year-old unemployed youth who are products of our public schools. We need new strategies involving major job training efforts by educational institutions and industry to ease these volatile tensions.

In conclusion, my remarks touch the concerns that we are trying to address in the process of reauthorizing vocational education legislation and the concerns that we, as citizens of this great nation, need to address in the process of reauthorizing vocational education legislation and the

concerns that we, as citizens of this great nation, need to address together over the coming years. With its many partners, the U.S. Department of Education will continue to make its vocational education efforts relevant to the context of the eighties and the decades to come. We welcome the input and the counseling that you can give us. We need input from the field to make sure that this great effort to reauthorize vocational education legislation is sound, practical, and helpful to the practitioners in the field. These are the people who, in the final analysis, will implement new programs to serve the vocational education needs of U.S. citizens. My concerns are with the management needed to build, improve, and strengthen our delivery system. I am concerned that we measure our success; that we be able to find out when we are meeting desired outcomes for target populations. So many times we plan for a modern, comprehensive program. I am certain of that. However, we then go back home and continue to provide an outdated, narrow program. We must devise a vocational education delivery system that is competent, modern, effective, and that gets rigorously evaluated, in terms of programming and improvement strategies. Through such evaluations, we will be sure that we are delivering the necessary skills.

I may have discussed things that you already know. But I hope my examination of the current vocational education delivery system, and the skills that this system will have to deliver in the future, will help you begin to develop strategies for using vocational education to improve productivity in the United States. It is our hope that the vocational education community, the business community, organizations, and states will join with us in strengthening the partnership that will improve vocational education's role in increasing productivity in America in the years to come.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Dr. Kent Lloyd

Question: Do you think that President Reagan will establish vocational education for all students as a national goal?

I cannot speak for the president, but I know that he is deeply sympathetic to this issue. I hope that we can urge his attention to just such a goal. I think we have talked a lot about it in the past, and the objection that always arises is the high cost. But I think we are in a serious enough situation now that we must establish that objective, that "mission" if you will. Then we must find out who should share in that cost, and how it should be shared. It is not easy, but we have to examine whether or not we are serious about it. We have fragmented our educational program so badly between basic skills and vocational education, and there is so much competition between these areas, that it is hard to come to grips with the more comprehensive problem. Somehow, one is supposed to be better than the other and the contending parties rarely speak to each other. Take a look at your own high schools.

Question: How can we convince the president and the other leaders of this country that we cannot afford to wait to move in the direction of providing every student with labor market skills?

Some of the statistics that are now coming out about what it is costing us from crime, for example, should be convincing to the leadership. Secretary Bell recently spoke with the attorney general. The attorney general, who has a task force on crime reduction, is very concerned about developing programs to reduce crime. One of the high priorities of this administration is to determine what causes crime. That is a very complex problem. Certainly, one of the causes is that some youth do not have employability skills, and cannot find jobs that provide them with a livelihood. Minority youngsters are disproportionately represented in this group of unemployed youth. In some urban areas, the dropout rate approaches 40 percent. If this problem continues in the future, at a time when we need more workers because the baby boom is over, we are going to be desperate for skilled workers. We simply must prepare ourselves to help these potential workers. We must also help those workers who are already among the unemployed. We must retrain them because we need them desperately.

Question: You have cited many examples of the failures of the vocational education delivery system. In many instances, however, vocational education has been highly successful. Is the U.S Department of Education going forth with a critical view of our past record, or is it going to point out the success stories so that the reauthorization debate can be directed toward what has been proven to work?

My concern here today was not to highlight all the success stories. Some of us are aware of them, and some of us are not. But if those success stories are that widespread, and in some states they are, I think we have got to present policymakers with the success stories that

represent options and alternatives. To date, I am not really sure that we have sold our story. I think we still have a big selling job to do. But the question facing the country's leaders is one of economic recovery. It is the number one priority in this battle to tackle inflation. The proposed cutback in federal funding of 25 percent will be painful. Our hope and our mission is to do something about inflation that will make the state and local dollars for vocational education much more valuable to you. But such cutbacks will also force us to take a look at how we are managing critical priorities. They are going to force us to take a hard look at how well we are doing in vocational education, in early childhood education programs, or any of the other programs that the U.S. Department of Education supports. We invite your critical comments, your help, and your advice on how we can do that. I know you have not been hesitant in the past to offer your thoughts to the U.S. Department of Education because I have been one of those making administrative suggestions based on these thoughts. We appreciate that, and we encourage you to tell us the success stories.

The White House is looking for the success stories and for the rationale behind successful business-industry partnerships because that is what the president is looking for. We must tell the story in ways that include business, industry, and education collaboration.

Question: Current federal vocational education funding is based on specific formulas that are designed to make the use of these funds accountable to taxpayers. If in the forthcoming reauthorization of this legislation funding is changed to block grants, how will the need for accountability to taxpayers be satisfied?

As you may know, the whole concept of a block grant is aimed at at least two or three objectives. One of these objectives, in the philosophy of this administration, is to give back to the states and the local entities the responsibility of making priority choices as to how they are going to use their money. We feel that state governments and local education systems are closer to the problem areas. We also feel that excessive federal government restrictions are taking too much of your time and money. Now that suggests that the state governments are going to have to become much more effective and responsible than some of them have been in the past. I have not been fooled into thinking that all state governments or state departments of education are more effective or more efficient than the federal government in handling these responsibilities. But it seems to me that we have to at least place the responsibility at the levels where problems exist.

As state plans are developed within the federal guidelines, the people responsible for the administration of funds will not be able to spend all the money on one problem or area. States will continue to have the responsibility to provide vocational education for all their citizens. In planning and implementing the programs, public hearings will be required in each state. Comments will be provided by the federal government. Every two years, a report to the federal government will be required on how these programs were handled and how the funds were spent. We want maximum participation. Obviously, special interest groups are going to shift from the federal to the state government level to battle for funds. Vocational education will have to make its case like anyone else. I think this offers us some real opportunity. But by no means are we abandoning categorical programs.

Question: One of the proposals now being considered is to issue vouchers to students and allow them to choose the school in which they want to use them. What impact will the voucher system have on public vocational education?

There is a great dilemma right now about the voucher system. On the one hand, the private educational groups cannot wait for it to start. On the other hand, the public educators are saying it will be the end of their systems because their financing will get cut.

There is no simple solution to this problem. What the private educators do not realize is that for their institutions to qualify for tuition tax credits through the voucher system, they will have to comply with all state requirements. As soon as that is done, a duplicate public education system will be created.

What we would like to encourage are multiple, pluralistic systems for delivering services. If we can get the maximum amount of incentive from the private sector, and if we can relax some of the rigid public systems and make them more experimental and flexible, it will allow better delivery of these services. I do not know anyone here that has not been chafed by the straight jackets placed on public vocational education by regulations from the federal, state, or local level. Our new system would allow programs to be a little more entrepreneurial in the way services are delivered. We are hoping that we can experiment with some systems that will promote that.

Question: What kind of an education system would you design that would enable all high school students to study a vocation, gain an entry-level skill, go for a first job, and still have time to take the courses to meet university admission requirements?

I have been studying the requirements for college admission in California as I have counseled my seven daughters through school. I suggest to you that there is room in current curriculum for options that would allow students to gain entry-level skills and still prepare for further education. I do not think students are pushed hard enough. I think they have too much time after school. They should have been given career orientation in elementary and junior high school and should have been pushed much harder in their academic training. In Japan, China, and Russia, some people are going to school six days a week, and the school day is longer. There are some youngsters who cannot do this because they cannot take that kind of pressure. I am not advocating that we wear them out or burn them out. I suggest that we make such systems attractive. There are students who are already carrying both loads, and are doing it very well. With the cooperation of industrial people and teachers, we could do much more with that eleventh and twelfth year in high school than we are now doing—both in vocational and in academic preparation. Why do we have to have it one way or the other?

Question: In former years there was a good partnership among vocational educators at the federal, state, and local levels. That seems to have disappeared, and an adversarial relationship exists. What can be done to redevelop such a creative, cooperative vocational education partnership?

The federal government, Secretary Bell, and our new assistant secretary for vocational and adult education, Dr. Robert Worthington, want to promote vocational education leadership. Certainly one of the roles of the federal government is to find out about the needs, the goals, the missions, and the objectives we must have in vocational education. We have that responsibility. We cannot shuffle that off as we move toward block grants. At the same time, it seems to me that we often throw up our hands and say, "I cannot do anything because I am just a teacher in the classroom. I cannot do anything because of a principal or superintendent who is not supportive." I raise the challenge that while you may not be able to turn the whole system around by yourself, you can start where you are. Examine what you are doing, and build coalitions on the local level, as well as on the state level, to call the attention of policymakers to the critical need for improving our vocational education delivery system. It is vital that at all levels, leaders start seeking solutions to the question of: "How can we achieve greater productivity in America?" We have to reexamine the objectives of what should be done and develop the best possible delivery system to get it done. I believe that this job is in the hands of the people who are already struggling to find new and better ways to do their jobs.

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